GCSE Examiners' Report

Media Studies

GCSE

Summer 2026

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Introduction

Our Principal Examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.[1]

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and component level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

[1] ***Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.***

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Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
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Executive Summary

The 2026 Component 1 examination was generally well received, with candidates showing particularly strong engagement with Question 2 in Section A, an area that has previously proved challenging. Centres prepared learners effectively, resulting in confident application of AO1 skills, especially in the Audience and Industry sections of Section B. The specification provided an appropriate level of challenge while allowing candidates of all abilities to demonstrate their knowledge. Many candidates engaged successfully with *This Girl Can*, the final year it appeared as a set product. Teaching of *GQ* magazine was also strong, with candidates using subject-specific terminology effectively when analysing images and coverlines. However, centres should broaden preparation to include additional aspects of media language, particularly narrative and genre. Candidates also demonstrated secure knowledge of *Fortnite* and *The Sun*, although further emphasis on the theoretical framework of Industry would strengthen responses. Overall, there were fewer unanswered questions than in previous years, alongside noticeable improvement in candidates' ability to reach well-supported conclusions and judgements in Question 2b.

In Component 2, candidates performed well on questions assessing AO2, demonstrating secure application of the theoretical framework for Media Language and Representation and confident analysis of the set television products and music videos. Performance on AO1 questions was less secure, particularly those focusing on Media Industries and Media Contexts. Encouragingly, candidates showed improved understanding of sitcom conventions, producing stronger analysis and more convincing judgements for *Man Like Mobeen* and *Modern Family*. Responses on *Luther* remained strong in its final year, while centres are encouraged to continue this success with *Trigger Point*. Performance on Question 3 also improved, with more candidates producing detailed analysis of music videos and thoughtful discussion of representation and context. However, the high proportion of candidates who did not attempt Question 2 highlighted weaknesses in conceptual understanding of Media Industries, particularly convergence and television distribution. Candidates generally performed better on Question 4, suggesting stronger knowledge of music products than television. Centres should strengthen teaching of television industry concepts and make greater use of available support resources to develop candidates' AO1 knowledge.

Component 3 saw good engagement across all brief options, although print briefs remained the most popular. Most centres completed the correct 2026 briefs, though a small number used the wrong ones. The component successfully enabled candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework, developed through Components 1 and 2, to practical production work. Centres adopted different delivery approaches, either offering a single brief or allowing candidates to choose from several options. Where multiple briefs were available, however, some centres found it challenging to ensure consistent assessment across different productions. The magazine brief was particularly popular, with the music genre generally proving more successful than the celebrity genre in meeting conventions. The film marketing brief also attracted many candidates, especially within the teen drama and action genres. Centres should continue to emphasise independent research, careful planning and well-developed Statements of Aims before production begins. They are also encouraged to use exemplar materials on the WJEC Secure site to ensure assessment remains aligned with national Eduqas standards.

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Media Studies

GCSE

Summer 2026

COMPONENT 1: EXPLORING THE MEDIA

Overview of the Component

The 2026 examination of Component 1 was generally well-received by the cohort, with particularly strong engagement with Question 2 of Section A, an area that has sometimes been challenging for learners. Centres prepared candidates well for Section B, with strong application of AO1 skills throughout the Audience and Industry sections.

The requirements of the specification were appropriately challenging for candidates of all abilities, while the products examined provided a broad range of opportunities and an appropriate level of expectation. This was the final assessment for *'This Girl Can'* and it was evident that many learners had engaged well with this set product.

The teaching of *GQ magazine* has proved to be successful overall, with some great use of subject specific terminology related to the textual analysis of the product and discussions of the image and coverlines; however, centres should be preparing candidates for a wider range of media language areas as it was evident that some were not prepared for narrative and genre to be assessed.

For Section B there was a strong engagement with both *Fortnite* and *The Sun*, with clear knowledge of the two products throughout the entire range of candidates. There is still a requirement to isolate the teaching of the theoretical framework of Industry and help candidates appropriately write about key concepts for each product.

It was encouraging to see fewer questions not attempted and an improvement from previous years in learners' abilities to draw effective conclusions and judgements when responding to Question 2b.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Media Language and Representation

Question 1a:

How does this *GQ* magazine front cover communicate meaning? Explore the following elements:
(a) Narrative [5]
(b) Genre [10]

AO2 1a: Analyse media products using the theoretical framework of media

The best responses for Question 1(a) were immediately able to apply key narrative terminology in deconstructing the image and coverlines on the GQ front cover. These included references to Propp and construction of a hero, narratology, including equilibrium and binary opposites. There was a real understanding of how elements of posture, camerawork, costume, colour and image size supported this reading and necessary recall of context from their learning was being explored well.

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Responses in the top bands for Question 1(b) were able to immediately engage with the question through the genre of fashion/men's/lifestyle and how the main image and coverlines supported this genre and provided meanings for the audience related to this. Some responses were also able to explore the magazine as a generic media form, and how key features were typical and effective in drawing out meaning for the audience.

Responses that were able to make links to the decisions of the editor/producers of GQ in the construction of both narrative and genre were often reaching the highest band. There were often discussions of branding, construction of a house-style and features of typicality in relation to the magazine industry.

In the middle and lower bands candidates were able to use terminology associated with the theoretical framework of media language well but were not always able to make connections to narrative or genre and the meaning linked to these.

Responses in the lower bands often struggled to make links between the features and the meaning, often providing textual analysis of their set product without making distinct links to the connotations for narrative or genre. Centres would be encouraged, for example, to explore the genre of all the set products to explore how specific readings can impact audience interpretation.

Some responses were not prepared for the media language elements of genre and narrative, with a number of responses providing responses about layout and design or image deconstruction. There were a significant number of responses for Question 1(b) that wrote about representation issues and or engaged in discussions about ethnicity which were not relevant to meaning linked to genre.

There was a marked improvement in candidates relabelling their paper, which demonstrates that centres are adequately preparing their learners to read the question paper carefully before starting their responses.

Question 2(a):

Explain how cultural contexts influence advertisements. Refer to the *This Girl Can* advertisement (2015) to support your points. [5]

AO1 2a and b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes

There was a strong engagement with Question 2, a considerable improvement in comparison to both the 2024 and 2025 season. Candidates were well prepared for the specific exploration of context and there was evidence of excellent teaching of the *This Girl Can* advert and its purpose.

There were a very small number of responses that combined both Question 2 (a) and (b) into one response. This should be discouraged and centres should prepare candidates for each question in isolation so that assessment is appropriate for each. While context does impact the representation for the set product, the assessment objective for Question 2(a) is specific to this response only.

The most successful responses to Question 2(a) were able to make wider reference to advertisements as a collective media form and directly linked to the contexts of fitness, identity, health and femininity during the time in which the advert was released. Reference to the wider campaign also showed strong knowledge from the teaching of this set product.

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Some responses for Question 2 (a) explored a variety of contexts and brought attention to how they overlapped in influence to result in the creation of the advert.

Fewer responses in this series carried out a textual analysis without reference to context, which has been a trend in previous series for this question, which suggests effective teaching in centres about how to carefully balance reference to the set product when discussing the contextual influences.

In the middle to lower bands there were some responses who wrote about the product influencing context, which was not engaging accurately with the question. There was also evidence of the word 'culture' being interpreted as an avenue for discussions of ethnicity and diversity. Centres would be encouraged to explore CPD materials on the teaching of context to minimise these confusions for future series.

Question 2(b)

Compare the representation of women in the advertisements for *This Girl Can* and Nike.

In your answer, you must consider:

- the choices the producers have made about how to represent women
- how far the representation of women is similar in the two adverts
- how far the representation of women is different in the two adverts. [25]

AO2 1a and 1b: Analyse media products using the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions

Candidates engaged well with Question 2(b) this year, and the unseen product helped candidates at all ability levels with this accessibility. There was a particularly high standard of textual analysis for both products, which enhanced the discussion of the representation of women.

The very best responses for Question 2(b) were able to carry through a strong sustained line of reasoning, using the bullet points from the question, to help structure their response in a careful way using excellent textual analysis to draw out judgements and conclusions on the representations.

Although not expected, it was encouraging to see responses in the mid to higher bands use the context provided on the unseen product to further their response, with many knowing who Alexia Putellas is and comparing her identity as a star to the unknown figure on the *This Girl Can* advert.

As with previous series, there are often a number of theories that are used during the analysis, which are not applied correctly and, in some instances, can restrict the candidate for their use of the theoretical framework. Theories that did appear include Van Zoonen, Mulvey, Butler and Gauntlett. While it is often good practice for aspirational candidates, these are not required to be taught and can often confuse candidates' responses if the unseen product does not fit prepared conceptual points.

The very best responses for Question 2(b) were able to discuss how the representations were constructed, beyond the obvious representations evident in the two products. It was also good to see these responses engage with the purpose of adverts, and how this was linked to the producers' choices; such as the clear difference between a global commercial brand like Nike and the lottery-funded set product.

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Mid-to-lower responses often relied on descriptive analyses that simply discussed what they were seeing on each advert, and they were not able to make suitable judgements, or use subject specific terminology effectively to enhance their responses.

Section B: Exploring Media Industries and Audience

Question 3

(a) Name the organisation that produces *Fortnite*. [1]
(b) Name the organisation that regulates video games. [1]
(c) Briefly explain two ways that *Fortnite* is regulated. [4]
(d) Explain how video games use websites to promote their product. Refer to *Fortnite* to support your points. [12]

AO1 1a and 1b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media

For Questions 3 (a) and (b) which assesses AO1 1a (demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media) it was good to see so many candidates respond with the correct answer. Epic Games and PEGI were by far the most common responses, with only a few errors on (b) where other regulators were chosen. For these low tariff responses, it is important that learners do not list multiple answers, hoping to get it correct, as this will have resulted in a mark of 0.

For Question 3(c), which assessed AO1 1a and b, the most successful responses were able to give two distinct reasons that were in clear, structured sentences and considered broader regulatory examples. The age rating was a popular example, as was reference to the online moderation of chat, parental tools and reduction in violence, gore or aggression.

Responses that rephrased their first sentence to complete a second sentence were not rewarded twice, and centres are encouraged to explore the wider regulation processes across all the media products taught through the theoretical framework of industry.

Candidates who were less successful with 3(c) wrote about elements of the gameplay without necessarily linking it to be a regulatory example.

For Question 3(d) the most common issue, as with previous series, is that candidates attempt to provide an answer using the theory of Uses and Gratifications, which is an audience approach. Question 3 assesses media industries and candidates must be prepared to respond fully to questions in this area of the theoretical framework.

Promotion was discussed well by the very large majority of responses, and there was a broad range of examples from the website used to exemplify their reasoning. The very best responses were able to bring specific examples of merchandise, synergies and collaborations with a focus on making profit and increasing gameplay.

Responses in the top bands were often able to pick out features of the website, such as the landing page, navigation bar and carousel which showed excellent teaching by centres. Some candidates did use some textual analysis skills, but in a confident way about where the user's eyes are drawn to in a way to bring about their attention to a feature of the game and/or website.

Responses in the lower bands often ignored the website and discussed social media in a generic way, while others discussed the game in detail without referring to the website. For

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future series it is encouraged that candidates are prepared for all elements of the set product(s).

Responses that were able to use the audience appropriately included reference to active audiences and how they enhance the promotion by bringing further engagement to the game and conversely providing profit for Epic Games. Candidates who used terminology associated with Uses and Gratifications but were linking it to promotion were able to access the middle bands if there was clearly an understanding about industry benefits.

Question 4:

(a) What type of newspaper is *The Sun*? [1]
(b) Identify two audiences for *The Sun* website. [2]
(c) Identify two ways audiences can access *The Sun* website. [2]
(d) Explain how audiences use news websites to meet their needs.
Refer to The Sun website to support your points. [12]

AO1 1a and 1b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media

Candidates responded well to Question 4 (a), with the largest quantity of responses being 'red-top tabloid' or 'tabloid'. Some candidates were rewarded for referencing *The Sun*'s political stance. There were a few responses that confused their political parties and were not rewarded if this was the case.

Some candidates reported their personal opinions about the newspaper in their responses which is not relevant and may be detrimental to their success.

Questions 4(b) and (c) were questions about the website, and the majority of candidates identified this well, however a few responses referred to the newspaper. Answers for (b) were often valid for both elements of the set product.

Question 4(b) had a broad range of answers; including through demographics, psychographics and political-leaning. Examiners accepted both younger audiences, clearly the target for the website, as well as older audiences moving into the digital space. Some responses that were not accepted included ABC1, middle class or simplistic answers such as 'those interested in news' which did not demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the set product.

Question 4(c) was commonly interpreted in two distinct ways. One interpretation focused on the device used to access the website — for example, a laptop, tablet or smartphone. The other interpretation focused on the access method or platform, such as searching online, following a link on social media, using the website address/QR code provided in the newspaper.

Question 4 (d) was responded to particularly well, and it was evident that through effective time-management, or an alternative ordering of answering the paper, that there were fewer 'not-attempted' responses than in previous series.

The question did not require specific reference to an audience theory, however it was encouraging that candidates were prepared to use Uses and Gratifications to help structure their responses and this often helped move them into the higher bands when it demonstrated their strong understanding of audience and appropriate use of terminology.

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The strongest responses did not need to reference the theory explicitly. Instead, they explored detailed examples of specific website features — such as Dear Deirdre, Sun Bingo, and Sports — to analyse the audiences most suited to each section. Candidates who made effective links between their answers to Question 4(b) and Question 4(c) were better able to explain how technology meets the needs of target users. This approach was particularly successful and demonstrated a genuinely synoptic understanding of the component.

Responses in the lower bands often discussed the newspaper, rather than the website, or used the structure of uses and gratifications in a generic way without specific reference to those features on the website.

Responses that explored the design of the website, using textual analysis, were rewarded appropriately for linking this to how this satisfied a need for the audience they were discussing.

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MEDIA STUDIES

GCSE

Summer 2026

COMPONENT 2: UNDERSTANDING MEDIA FORMS AND PRODUCTS

Overview of the Component

Overall, candidates performed well on questions assessing AO2, evident through the generally secure application of the theoretical framework for Media Language and Representation and confident analysis of the set television products and music videos but were slightly less confident when responding to questions assessing AO1, which in this series, had a focus on knowledge and understanding of Media Industries and Media Contexts.

Last year candidates demonstrated a better understanding of the conventions of crime drama than sitcom on Question 1, however this year it was encouraging to see a marked improvement in the quality of analysis of the extracts for both *Man Like Mobeen* and *Modern Family*, candidates studying sitcom selecting more appropriate examples and having a more secure understanding of generic conventions to enable them to make convincing judgements and conclusions about their set product in Question 1b. Responses on the popular *Luther* option remained strong in the final year of assessment for this product, and centres are encouraged to continue with their excellent practice when exploring the new crime drama option, *Trigger Point*.

Performance on Q3 was generally confident this series, with more candidates reaching the higher bands by using focused and detailed analysis of the set music videos and well-considered links to contexts to make appropriate conclusions about representation of social groups. It was also pleasing to see a more detailed, analytical approach to *Good as Hell* and *Intentions* this year, reflecting a clear response from centres to last year's feedback.

The number of candidates (12%) who failed to attempt Question 2 was a concern this series, with a lack of conceptual knowledge preventing access to the question on the impact of convergence on television distribution. Only candidates who had at least the basic but essential understanding of convergence as the merging of technologies or companies leading to different ways of delivering programmes, were able to respond to the question in a relevant way, usually explaining how streaming platforms and cross-platform promotion and digital marketing has changed the way products reach audiences and generate revenue. This highlights the need to ensure candidates are prepared to respond to questions with an Media Industries focus on either their music or television set products. Centres are advised to use The GCSE Media Studies Glossary as a starting point to support knowledge and understanding of key industry terminology and also introduce candidates to the Blended Learning Resources for the set music and television products, which offer opportunities to apply key industry concepts to the set products.

Following last year's trend, candidates performed on average significantly better on Question 4 than Question 2. When responding to A01 questions, candidates were generally able to use examples more effectively from their music artist's online media than their television products. This indicates a need for centres to take opportunities to highlight the importance of candidates learning accurate, relevant and thorough knowledge relating to the production, distribution and marketing of their set television products. The Set Product Fact Sheets and Blended Learning Resources provide candidates with the key information needed to help

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them develop more thorough knowledge and achieve the detailed reference to the television set products required to reach the higher bands.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1(a):
Explore how facial expressions and body language create meaning in this extract. [10]

AO2 1a: Analyse media products using the theoretical framework of media.

This question was assessing the ability to analyse the use of facial expressions and body language in the extract from the chosen set television product (*Luther, Man Like Mobeen* or *Modern Family*) and proved highly accessible to the full ability range. The three extracts all offered candidates many opportunities to select and analyse specific examples of characters' gesture codes and candidates responded appropriately to the focus on facial expressions and body language, most exploring both aspects and using two or three examples. It was pleasing to see so many candidates achieving the highest band across all three products, reflecting how well centres are preparing candidates to explore the set products for both the crime drama and sitcom television genres.

More successful responses identified gestures from specific moments or scenes in the extract and explored their connotations in detail. Popular examples from *Luther* included Alice's frantic typing to reflect her obsession to find out Luther's weaknesses and Luther's running away from Reed connoting his impatience with the case and his maverick character role. For sitcom, examples from the Indicative Content such as Mobeen's gestures in the supermarket reflecting his relationship with the community and Claire's expressions when dealing with her co-workers featured frequently.

Higher band responses also explored meanings in greater depth, often suggesting multiple connotations and exploring the purpose of specific gesture codes in relation to character archetypes, generic conventions and aspects of representation such as stereotypes. For example, Alice's sinister smile connoting her evil intent and her pleasure in discovering the information on Luther and also constructing her as the archetypal villain and a less typical female antagonist. Gesture codes in the sitcoms were often linked to their comedic purpose with many candidates exploring how Mitchell and Cam's exaggerated open hand gestures when congratulating themselves created comedy for the sitcom audience or how Mobeen's hand gesture to check his breath constructed a relatable comedy moment.

Candidates were less successful when they took a more descriptive approach. In the lower bands, responses remained quite generalised when discussing examples from the extract and needed more specific details to reach the higher bands. For example, 'Luther looked stressed' or 'Mobeen's behaviour was childish' are valid observations but lack the specific evidence needed for an appropriately analytical response.

Question 1(b):
How typical of the genre is the camerawork in this extract? [10]

AO2 1a and 1b: Analyse media products using the theoretical framework to make judgements and draw conclusions.

This question required candidates to explore the genre typicality of camerawork in the extract and was largely well-handled across the ability range. It was pleasing to see a generally secure understanding of the concept of genre and a good use of accurate and appropriate subject specific terminology, reflecting how well centres are preparing their candidates to identify and explore technical codes in moving audio-visual set products. The

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majority of responses addressed the 'how typical' aspect of the question, again reflecting the good practice in centres in preparing their candidates to respond to this type of question.

More successful responses struck an appropriate balance between analysis and making judgements, clearly addressing the 'how far' part of the question, making appropriate judgements and conclusions about genre typicality based on their analysis of specific examples of camerawork. While the majority of candidates concluded that the camerawork in *Luther* was typical of the crime drama genre, with its long city shots to establish the urban location and over the shoulder shots to position the audience with the protagonist, many sitcom responses identified what they considered to be less typical features of the sitcom genre, including the single camera set up and direct address to camera in *Modern Family* and the partially obscured camera and selective focus used in *Man Like Mobeen*.

Responses reaching the higher bands also more accurately identified specific aspects of camerawork and suggested particular functions associated with characters, genre or narrative, for example, to establish setting or construct character roles. Some stronger responses explored the purpose of camera movement and editing, including the tracking shots of Luther to follow the protagonist's journey in the narrative, the rapid pace of editing to build anticipation in the audience during Alice's internet search or the use of split screen editing in the supermarket scene in *Man Like Mobeen* to offer the audience different perspectives and progress the narrative. The realism constructed through documentary style camerawork was frequently the focus of the more successful responses on both sitcoms, including the mockumentary style used for Claire's confessional sofa scene in *Modern Family*, which was discussed as atypical for traditional sitcoms but more typical of modern mockumentaries, which were equally valid approaches.

In the lower bands, candidates were still able to select relevant examples of camera shots or movements but were less accurate with their use of subject specific terminology and did not address the 'how far' part of the question as confidently, limiting their responses to basic analysis of camerawork in the extract. Some did not engage with typicality at all, which meant they could not demonstrate their ability to make judgements and draw conclusions, preventing them from accessing the higher bands. Centres are advised to ensure candidates have a secure knowledge of key conventions in their chosen television genre so they can make appropriate judgements about genre typicality and access the higher bands.

Question 2
Explain the impact of media convergence on the distribution of television crime dramas or sitcoms. [10]

AO1 1a and 1b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media.

This question, which had a Media Industries focus, proved the most challenging on the paper this year. While the majority of candidates could show at least a basic understanding of media convergence and make some relevant points on its impact on the distribution of their set television products, many were unable to access the question since they lacked the conceptual knowledge required. This resulted in 12% of candidates failing to attempt the question, highlighting the importance of ensuring that candidates are fully prepared to respond to questions on all areas of the theoretical framework for Media Industries.

More successful responses had an industry focus, and clear understanding of how convergence (of technologies or companies) has impacted television distribution through discussion of the rise of streaming platforms, increasing global reach and revenues through subscriptions, or the move to cross-platform convergence offering different marketing methods, including the role of social media. Some of the strongest responses were on

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sitcoms, many candidates, for example, demonstrating excellent knowledge of how YouTube, BBC3 online, BBCiPlayer and Netflix had impacted the distribution and marketing of *Man Like Mobeen*.

Another feature of responses reaching the higher bands was the use of both the historical and contemporary products to show an understanding of how media convergence has changed television distribution over time, for example, how digital streaming and cross-platform marketing has enabled the *Friends* franchise to profit from making the programme accessible to a new generation.

Less successful responses lacked focus on the impact of convergence, but some were still able to gain marks by showing basic knowledge of how their television products were distributed, for example, by reference to *Luther*'s availability on BBC iPlayer and Netflix. Others demonstrated some knowledge of convergence but were unable to apply this to the appropriate television products, instead using examples including *The Archers* and *Fortnite.* There were also frequent inaccuracies, most concerningly the misconception that *The Sweeney* and *Friends* have been distributed by the BBC.

A significant number of attempts confused convergence with contexts and distribution with diversity, and this resulted in responses discussing representations, which lacked relevance. It was concerning that so many candidates appeared to assume that Question 2 would be assessing Media Contexts so centres should ensure that candidates are prepared to respond to questions on all areas of the theoretical framework on both their television and music texts. As listed in the specification, one of the questions assessing knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework will be assessing knowledge and understanding of Media Contexts each series and the other will have either an Audiences or a Media Industries focus.

Media convergence is a key industry concept at GCSE, listed in the industry content grid in the specification as 'the impact of the increasingly convergent nature of media industries across different platforms and different national settings'. Media convergence in the television industry is also covered in the Set Product Fact Sheets for *Man Like Mobeen* and *Modern Family* and the Blended Learning resource for *Trigger Point*, available on Eduqas Digital Resources. Centres are advised to encourage candidates to use the online resources, which provide key knowledge on all areas of the theoretical framework for the television set products, to consolidate learning in class. It is also good practice to take opportunities to make links between the set products for Components 1 and 2, ensuring candidates are able to transfer their knowledge and understanding of concepts introduced in Component 1 to their Component 2 set products.

Question 3:
How far do these two music videos challenge stereotypes of social groups? [20]

AO2 1a and 1b: Analyse media products using the theoretical framework of media, including in relation to their contexts, to make judgements and draw conclusions.

The extended response question had a Representation focus this year and it was very pleasing to see how well candidates performed on this question, indicating how thoroughly they had been prepared by centres to demonstrate their understanding of the theoretical framework through analysis of the set music videos. The focus on stereotypes proved very accessible, with less than 3% failing to attempt the question, and most candidates were able to select some appropriate examples from their set music videos and explore representations of appropriate social groups. As suggested in the Indicative Content, most responses explored social groups related to age, gender and ethnicity such as 'young black females'. Analysis skills were also generally well developed, the majority of candidates able

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to use appropriate subject specific terminology to explore the connotations of media language and show their understanding of the constructed nature of representations. It was excellent to see an increase in the number of candidates exploring the significance of audio codes through their analysis of details from the song lyrics, in addition to the more popular choices of exploring visual elements such as costume and technical codes including camera shots and angles.

References to theoretical perspectives were largely appropriate this year, many candidates applying Mulvey or Van Zoonen's feminist approaches to their analysis of the yacht scene in *The Man* and some demonstrating an effective use of Alvarado and Gilroy to make well-considered judgements about the more progressive representations of ethnicity in *Superheroes, Intentions* and *Good as Hell*. Another strength this series was reference to contexts, with the majority of candidates able to make generally appropriate links between aspects of culture and society and the representations in their set music videos. *Superheroes* and *The Man* remained the most popular combination but there was a significant increase in centres choosing *Good as Hell* and *Intentions* this year, as well as a marked improvement in the quality and depth of analysis of responses on these products, reflecting the good practice of centres in delivering these options. It was also excellent to see very few rubric infringements this year, a small number of candidates only exploring one set music video and fewer still exploring the videos by both male or both female artists.

More successful responses were characterised by their very specific, detailed examples from both videos and their more convincing engagement with the 'how far' part of the question. Responses in the higher bands also often chose more specific social groups to explore, such as the contrasting representations of fathers in *Superheroes* and *The Man* or the stereotypical representation of black rappers in *Intentions*, and showed a more secure understanding of stereotypes and their purpose in the videos, for example, exploring the satirical nature of the use of exaggerated Alpha male stereotype in *The Man* or the progressive representation of plus-size women to challenge beauty standards and empower audiences in *Good as Hell*.

In the middle and lower bands, most candidates were generally still able to explore some more obvious aspects of representation but were often lacking a clear focus on specific social groups, with a more generalised approach, for example, discussing 'men' as a social group in *The Man*, while higher band responses successfully explored the contrast between Tayler Swift's toxic behaviour and details such as the disapproving look of the waiter on the yacht, to conclude that the video was only challenging a very specific male stereotype.

Less successful responses were characterised by a tendency to simply describe the representations in the music videos or offer unsupported opinions about the music artists, often leading to basic conclusions which lacked reasoning. To access the higher bands, candidates need to engage more carefully with the specific question set and take a more analytical approach, using specific examples from the music products to support their judgements.

Question 4:
Explain how online media reflects the culture and society in which it is produced, Refer to the official website and/or social media for either Taylor Swift or Lizzo to support your points.
[10]

AO1 2a and 2b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.

The focus for Question 4 this year was Media Contexts the question offered candidates plenty of scope to show knowledge and understanding of how online music products reflect

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social and cultural contexts. The option to use the official websites and/or social media of their set music artist proved helpful, giving candidates the opportunity to choose from a wide range of appropriate examples to make links between their set products and relevant aspects of culture and society. Responses on Taylor Swift largely focused on politics and feminism, or the parasocial relationship she creates with her fans through her website and social media reflecting contemporary culture, while responses on Lizzo generally referred more to her social media than the website, most frequently her posts on Instagram and TikTok promoting female body confidence or black empowerment.

The most successful responses were characterised by their highly appropriate links between specific elements of the artist's website or social media and relevant aspects of culture and society, and their accurate, detailed knowledge. It was pleasing to see some candidates referring to the recent *Toy Story* collaboration on the Taylor Swift website to explain how online media reflects popular culture trends and others using Lizzo's promotion of her *Yitty* clothing brand across different social media sites to make links to both consumer culture and body positivity.

Less successful approaches were usually characterised by either a limited or inaccurate knowledge of contexts or a lack of detailed knowledge of the set product, with a tendency towards describing features of the websites such as merchandise and album releases, lacking links to aspects of culture and society. Some candidates attempted to produce a relevant response by discussing the relationship between music artists' online media and their fan community, but concerningly, a significant number were unable to make any reference to their artists' online media, instead referring to their set music video, limiting the relevance of their response.

Centres should consider strategies to ensure their candidates' knowledge and understanding is as detailed, accurate and secure for online music media as it is for their music videos. Leading with a contextual introduction to the artists and their online presence before zooming in on specific examples from the websites, at least two social media sites and then the set video music video may be a helpful approach. Centres are also advised to encourage candidates to actively engage with the Eduqas Blended Learning Resources and the Set Product Fact Sheets on their chosen music artist to support their learning.

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MEDIA STUDIES

GCSE

Summer 2026

COMPONENT 3: CREATING MEDIA PRODUCTS

Overview of the Component

AO3 (30%): Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.

There was evidence of engagement across all the brief options this year, although print briefs remain the most popular. Most centres responded to the set briefs for assessment in 2026 although there was evidence of a small number of centres completing the wrong briefs.

The focus of the component is the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework which is embedded during the study of set texts in Component 1 and Component 2. Candidates are assessed on the strength of their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework and how meaning can be created through their statement of aims and productions.

Centres took different approaches to the component with some centres offering only one brief option whilst others gave candidates a choice of briefs/genres, both of which are acceptable approaches. Where there is more than one brief option being offered to candidates, centres must ensure that there is parity of assessment across the different briefs. This was sometimes problematic within some centres when assessing the different productions against each other.

The magazine option was popular this year although the celebrity genre did create some confusion within some centres, many centres opted for the music genre and tended to be more successful in adhering to the conventions of the genre. The film marketing brief was also popular this year with teen drama and action both appealing to candidates.

Centres are reminded that whatever the chosen brief, candidates must be guided to engage in thorough independent research to enable candidates to understand the typical codes and conventions of the form and chosen genre. After the research is completed, planning must be conducted to ensure the candidates have a solid production concept before moving on to their statement of aims where they will express their plans in a more formal manner.

All centres are advised to access exemplar work on the WJEC Secure site to ascertain the standards for Component 3 before assessing the work in their own centres to ensure that assessment is in line with national standards.

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Tasks

Comments on tasks/questions relating to candidate performance/meeting assessment criteria

Administration:

This year was the second year in which work was uploaded along with the marks directly to IAMIS rather than using Surpass, simplifying the process for centres. The slight change in process this year required centres to upload 15 sample candidates rather than the previous 10. Most centres uploaded work to IAMIS in advance of the deadline, using appropriate file formats. There were some cases of problematic file formats being uploaded within Zip files. Files such as .psd and GIMP project files are not suitable file formats and cannot be accepted for moderation. Centres are reminded to check the list of appropriate file formats and to check files before uploading to IAMIS to ensure they can be opened to avoid any delays in the moderation of the work.

Extra care should be taken if uploading a website – candidates submitting a website production must include the URL as a hyperlink on the coversheet in section A for the moderator to easily access the site. It is vital that centres make sure any permissions/access to websites is checked before sending website links and that the website does not expire after a certain amount of time to avoid the moderation process being delayed. Centres are reminded that research, planning and draft work should not be uploaded to IAMIS, only the coversheet and the final production for each candidate. There were a small number of instances where large amounts of draft versions and other documents were uploaded which slowed the moderation process whilst the final versions needed to be identified. Extra care should be taken when uploading the work for each candidate, ensuring a completed coversheet and production are uploaded together to the correct candidate folder on IAMIS.

It greatly helped the moderation process when each file was clearly labelled with the candidate's name/candidate number and the description of the piece of work, e.g. 'DVD cover'; however, this was not always the case which slows the moderation process. A small number of centres continue to upload the DVD cover as three separate files – the front, back and spine individually. This is not recommended, and candidates should be creating and submitting this as one file, enabling them to see the layout and design of the production as a whole, rather than in small segments.

A number of centres failed to complete the coversheet correctly and some sections were left completely blank which hinders the moderation process and often leads to a re-upload being requested. Some candidates completed Section A in detail, taking the opportunity to outline their research, planning and production processes. This aids moderation and it is especially important for candidates who have taken photographs in unusual or distant locations to explain how they created their images to confirm that these are original.

Some candidates failed to complete Section A as required, which made it very difficult to assess how their research and planning had impacted upon the production. These stages should be signed off by the assessor and include the dates that each stage has been completed. Several centres did not sign off the various stages throughout the process, and some had the same date for each section. It is also crucial that the box regarding non-original material is completed fully; this was omitted on several occasions which made it difficult to moderate and to understand which images were original. Candidates should be adding to this section during the production process, adding any non-original images such as logos throughout to avoid any issues regarding plagiarism. Centres are reminded that AI is not permitted, and both the candidate and assessor must sign to declare AI has not been

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used as part of the production process. Further guidance regarding AI can be found on the Eduqas GCSE Media Studies website under the Non-Exam Assessment section.

Many centres included detailed comments in Section C, giving examples from candidates' work to support the assessment decisions. This is extremely important and helpful, especially as annotation on the work itself is not a requirement. Where phrases from the generic marking grid are used such as 'good', it is important to ensure that these match the mark band awarded, which was not always the case. There were some cases of no teacher commentary on Section C which made the moderation process difficult as it was not always clear why the work had been given the mark it had; it is crucial that this section is completed fully and signed off. Several centres copied and pasted the assessment commentary directly from the assessment grid into this section which is not appropriate. Whilst using the language from the assessment bands is encouraged, the comments need to be specific about the candidate work to make it clear to the moderator where and why the marks have been awarded. There was evidence from some centres of internal moderation of the work on the coversheets which is desirable to complete, where possible, to ensure the assessment is robust. There were a small number of instances where incorrect marks had been entered into IAMIS and did not match the marks on the coversheet, care should be taken to ensure all marks are accurate and any mistakes are declared to Eduqas as soon as possible so the correct marks can be entered into IAMIS.

Centres are reminded that the cover sheet is a 'working document', which should be given to candidates at the start of the Component 3 process and completed throughout. Centres should refer to the guidance documents on the Eduqas GCSE Media Studies website under Non-Exam Assessment where a model completed coversheet and a narrative PowerPoint can be found. Centres are reminded to use the newest cover sheet for future submissions which includes reference to the use of AI.

Centres should ensure that the coversheet is completed fully for every candidate and not just those candidates that are sampled. If further work is called for by the moderator, having all the candidate coversheets ready to upload can avoid any delays in the moderation.

Meeting the requirements of the brief:
Candidates must respond to the set brief for the year of assessment. A small number of centres completed the wrong brief for assessment in 2026. It is crucial that the new brief is downloaded on the 1st March each year from the WJEC secure site and any old versions of the briefs are discarded to avoid any errors. Where candidates have chosen to complete a genre different to that stated in the briefs, this must be reflected in the assessment of the production in column 2 of the assessment grid.

Most candidates adhered to the requirements for length and quantity of work, although some produced less than the required number of, for example, magazine or web pages, this should be reflected in the assessment of these productions using the assessment grid for guidance. There were a small number of candidates who created and submitted more than the specified number of pages. Candidates can only be assessed and awarded for the number/length stated in the brief to ensure parity across centres, submitting extra pages should not be permitted to avoid confusion in terms of which pages have been assessed.

While research and planning are not assessed elements of Component 3 and does not need to be submitted, both are essential to ensure that candidates are able to complete a successful production that responds to the brief. Where candidates did not discuss their research or planning in Section A of the coversheet, their lack of awareness of the codes and conventions of the chosen form was usually evident in their production work.

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To ensure parity across centres and forms it is essential that candidates adhere to all aspects of the set brief, including that:

- The content and style of the production must be suitable for the target audience range specified in the brief. Some candidates extended the range of the target audience and chose to feature characters/models which would not engage the specified target audience which needs to be reflected in the assessment of the production in column 2.
- All productions must adhere to the codes and conventions of the chosen form; this should be informed by completing detailed research and planning before starting the production. For example, film marketing campaigns should have clear branding and reflect the conventional layout of the form. Some candidates did not feature consistent use of fonts, layout and genre conventions to demonstrate the brand identity of the product. There was often an inconsistency between the branding on the DVD cover and posters which needs to be reflected in the assessment in column 2 of the assessment grid. There were many instances of the spine being the wrong way around on the DVD which wasn't always reflected in the assessment of column 2.
- All of the minimum requirements listed in the brief must be included in the productions and if they are not, this must be reflected in the assessment of the production in column 2 of the assessment grid. For example, the required number of original images and the stipulated number of characters must be evident. There were a number of examples of work being awarded full marks but aspects like logos and names of the director/actors missing.
- The focus of column 3 of the assessment gird is to use media language to communicate meanings and construct representations. Candidates need to ensure they are taking and selecting the most purposeful images to communicate meanings and construct representations of a social group successfully. Many candidates are still using images that aren't taken specifically for the purpose of the production, which hinders the candidate's ability to communicate meanings and construct representations.

Statement of Aims:
Most candidates completed the Statement of Aims in the specified area on the coversheet, but some centres did not utilise this space and included an attachment instead. Centres should be copying and pasting the statement of aims into the specified area on the cover sheet and including the exact word count in the box provided. Candidates must adhere to the 250-word limit (+/- 10%) and if candidates exceed this word count, teachers should cease marking the statement. It is perfectly acceptable for candidates to use bullet points to structure the statement to maximise the word count.

The Statement of Aims must be completed after the research and planning stage and before the production begins, the statement must be written in the future tense. The statement needs to be signed off by both the candidate and the teacher before the production process begins, this ensures that the production is fully planned, and the aims address the requirements of the set brief.

Candidates in higher bands demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework and made detailed and specific links to their own production. Subject specific terminology was excellently embedded, and some candidates referred to theoretical perspectives within their statements although this is not a requirement. Where theoretical perspectives are included, these must be appropriate and applied correctly and concisely rather than a descriptive approach to keep within the word count.

Production:
The print briefs continue to be the most popular option although there was evidence of all the brief submitted this year. There was evidence of highly sophisticated knowledge and

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understanding of the theoretical framework across all the briefs and there was a high level of creative engagement with the tasks across many of the centres.

There continues to be some issues with candidates not using original images in the productions, centres are reminded that all images included in the production must be original and generated by the candidate. The inclusion of found images, even where they have been significantly manipulated, is not acceptable. In some cases, it was difficult to determine whether candidates' images were original as this information was not available on the coversheet. There was also a small number of instances where images seem to have been shared between candidates, this is not permitted, each candidate needs to take their own original images. The billing/credit block continues to be one of the biggest issues with regards to use of non-original images. Billing/credit blocks and technical information should not be copied and pasted from an existing media product. Centres are reminded that all aspects of the production other than logos need to be original.

It is important that the images used in the production have been taken specifically for the purpose of creating the production and not found incidentally for example, from the social media accounts of candidates. Whilst candidates are free to take their images wherever they wish, the images must be taken with the purpose of the production in mind to be able to communicate meanings and construct representations effectively. Candidates must be in control of the construction of images and guide their model's body language/facial expression to construct purposeful representations and communicate meanings to audiences. There were many instances of incidental images being used, particularly in the music magazine production, where images of crowds and people at concerts were used which are not suitable for the purpose of this assessment.

There was plenty of evidence of accurate application of the assessment grid to assess candidate work; however, there was a significant number of centres that had assessed the work generously, extremely so in some cases. Candidates were over-assessed in column 2 of the assessment grid where the codes and conventions of the form had not been constructed successfully. Common issues such as having the spine the wrong way around and the technical information area not being conventionally laid out led many candidates to be over-awarded. If productions are not following typical codes and conventions of the form and genre, this needs to be reflected in column 2 of the assessment grid. Candidates also need to meet all the requirements of the brief and appeal to the specific target audience in column 2 of the assessment grid. For assessment in band 5, candidates need to have met all the requirements laid out in the brief, there were instances of candidates being given full marks but some of the requirements were missing.

Column 3 also had over-rewarding in some centres, there was a tendency to over-reward construction of representations and the communicating of meaning. Many candidates failed to include images of people in their productions which significantly hinders their ability to construct representations and communicate meanings. Some candidates only chose to use 1 or 2 images including people/characters and had images or clothes and/or accessories for example. Whilst these might be relevant for the genre, they do not help construct representations and priority should be given to images which included people/characters to secure higher assessment in column 3 of the assessment grid.

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Task marking:

Comments on approaches to internal marking

BRIEF 1: Television/Online

Either:

(a) Create the opening sequence for a new television soap opera. Your production must target an audience of 16–24-year-olds.

Or:

(b) Create a functioning website, including a homepage and one other linked for a new television series in the soap opera genre. Your production must target an audience of 16–24-year-olds.

There were very few candidates who chose this brief this year of those that did, there were some examples of good knowledge and understanding of the conventions of the form and soap opera genre demonstrated. The conventions were often edited thoughtfully to create a successful and opening sequences that were engaging and suitably appealing to the target audience. The most successful candidates had adhered to the requirements of the set brief and incorporated a range of shots to establish representations of characters and the genre conventions. Successful candidates constructed clear character roles and carefully controlled the various aspects of media language such as everyday costumes and settings to anchor the soap opera conventions, engage the audience and create a clear opening narrative to the episode.

A small number of centres offered the website option, some candidates were successful in being able to construct clear narrative and genre whilst conforming to the conventions of websites for a soap opera.

BRIEF 2: Magazines/Online

Either:

(a) Create a front cover, contents page and a single-page article for a new celebrity or music magazine. Your production must target an audience of 16–24-year-olds.

Or:

(b) Create a functioning website, including a homepage and one other linked page for a new celebrity or music magazine. Your production must target an audience of 16–24-year-olds.

Brief 2 remained one of the most popular options for submission this year and there were some excellent realisations of the brief. Most candidates opted for the print option but there were a few websites submitted.

The celebrity magazine genre proved popular with candidates however, there were many candidates who had misinterpreted the brief and many candidates who had been over-assessed for successfully embedding the conventions of the ‘celebrity’ magazine genre. Many candidates created magazines that were more general lifestyle or fashion focused rather than the ‘celebrity’ genre specified in the brief. As stated in the notes for guidance that accompanied the briefs, a *“celebrity magazine (also known as a gossip/tabloid magazine) is one that focusses on stories about the personal lives of celebrities and other well-known personalities. Celebrity magazines tend to feature a variety of celebrities on the front cover and in the magazine, such as members of the Royal Family, singers and reality TV stars.*

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These magazines can often use sensationalist language to attract the audience and are often busy and bright in their layout and design, although some more simplistic layouts can also be seen in some celebrity magazines. Learners should research magazines that illustrate the conventions of the celebrity magazine genre and those that relate to the magazine form; examples of celebrity magazines include Hello*,* Closer*,* OK! *and* Heat.*"*

A large number of candidates created general lifestyle magazines, focussing on fashion and other general lifestyle topics and opting for typical layouts often seen in general lifestyle/fashion magazines which are not appropriate for the 'celebrity' genre that was set this year. It is essential that the Notes for Guidance are used to ensure that there is no misinterpretation of the briefs and that candidates are researching and planning productions that meet the specified genres for the year of assessment. The music magazine genre was very popular this year and these tended to be more successful in terms of embedding the conventions of the genre compared to the celebrity magazine genre.

The most successful candidates had clearly completed thorough research into existing products in the celebrity and music genres which clearly helped candidates apply the knowledge and understanding of the form and genre within their own productions. There were some excellent examples of original branding on the front cover which was replicated in the contents page and article which helped create a sense of brand identity across the three products.

There were several candidates who did not have a secure understanding of the conventional layout and design of single page articles and contents pages. There were cases of candidates not using the space of the article appropriately and leaving large areas blank or not using columns. It was evident where candidates had not completed thorough research and planning into the layout and design of single page articles and contents pages, some candidates struggled with how to create these successfully.

There were also a number of candidates who failed to establish representations on their front covers due to the mode of address being inappropriate, for example there were instances of people having their backs to the camera or having their faces obscured in each image which made it difficult to establish representations. Several candidates included images which contained no people, this limited their ability to secure a higher mark in column 3 as no representations of social groups could be constructed. This needed to be reflected in the assessment of the production in column 3 of the assessment gird and this wasn't always the case, which led to some of the assessment of the productions to be deemed as generous. Candidates are advised to use as many images of people as possible to aid the construction of representations – may candidates only use one or two images of people, and the rest of the images are made up of related props/settings such as musical instruments/concert venues etc. which may be relevant to the genre, but not necessary help construct representations.

A small number of centres submitted the online option and there were some excellent examples of websites for celebrity and music magazines. A number of candidates who chose this option failed to ancho the magazine aspect of the website, candidates should be reminded that the main production is a magazine and this needs to be reflected in the website for the magazine by mentioning the magazine brand throughout and following the conventions of magazine websites consistently.

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BRIEF 3: Film Marketing

Create a DVD/Blu-ray front and back cover (including spine) and a main theatrical poster for a new film in the teen drama or action genre. Your production must target an audience of 14–20-year-olds.

This remained a very popular option within centres and there was evidence of excellent examples of candidate work. The most successful candidates developed a coherent campaign, demonstrating a brand identity for the film across the DVD cover and poster. Some struggled to develop a clear 'brand identity' that linked the poster and DVD cover together, for example they included very different images and font styles across the campaign. If work does not maintain a brand identity across the products this should be reflected in column 2 of the assessment grid.

The teen drama genre proved popular with candidates and the use of school settings and costumes were appropriate for this genre hence why many candidates may have chosen this option. Lots of candidates followed the requirements of the brief and successfully created engaging narratives that would appeal to the target audience. Some candidates failed to establish three main characters, this should be considered and planned for during the planning stage of the production to ensure this requirement can be successfully met. If this has not been met this needs to be reflected in the assessment, which was not always the case. The action genre was equally popular, and candidates could use their knowledge and understanding of the genre from Component 1 to anchor the conventions of the genre.

Applying the conventions of the DVD and poster form proved challenging to some candidates who did not conform to recognised conventions and did not include key elements of the brief such as the director and actor names on the front cover. The assessment of this continues to be significantly over-assessed in some centres.

The layout and design of DVD back covers was still an area of challenge in many cases as some candidates did not conform to typical conventions, particularly in the bottom half of the back cover where the technical information is usually found. There were several instances where candidates who used copied and pasted technical information and credit/billing blocks. This is not permitted, and all elements need to be created from scratch (other than the logos). Some candidates used copied and pasted billing blocks that mentioned the names of other films and production companies which did not meet the company logo used, these inconsistencies need to be considered when assessing the production. A small number of centres had been given a template for this part of the DVD cover and all candidate's ended up with a very similar layout and design, this is not permitted, and candidates should be creating this from scratch.

The DVD spine continues to be an area of challenge with a number of candidates putting the title the wrong way around, this was often not reflected in the assessment which led to the assessment to be deemed generous for column 2 of the assessment grid. There was also evidence replication of images across the poster and DVD and some candidates failed to include the required number of images across the production which again, needs to be reflected in the assessment.

There were quite a number of candidates who did not include any characters in their productions, or only included one/two characters, not only does this not meet the requirements of the brief but it also makes constructing representations of social groups very difficult so needs to be reflected in both columns of the assessment grid.

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Centres are reminded that the use of found images in thumbnails, as backgrounds and as part of special effects are not permitted; all images must be original and generated by the candidate.

BRIEF 4: Music Marketing/ Online

Either:

(a) Create an original music video to promote a new artist or band in the hip-hop or folk music genre. Your production must target an audience of 16–24-year-olds.

(b) Create a functioning website, including a homepage and one other linked page promoting a new artist or band in the hip-hop or folk music genre. Your production must target an audience of 16–24-year-olds.

There were quite a few centres who submitted this brief this year. There was evidence of candidate work that fully adhered to the codes and conventions of the genre, for example by constructing representations relevant to the genre, the creation of a star persona, featuring performance and narrative footage and interpreting the lyrics effectively to communicate meanings. There were some creative interpretations which merged performance and narrative/symbolism to construct successful music videos from within the hip-hop and folk genre.

Lack of construction of star persona continues to impact the success of some music videos. A number of candidates did not include any performance footage to establish the identity of the artist/band. In such cases, candidates had often been over-rewarded due to the lack of representation of the artist being constructed. There were a number of candidates who used images/footage from concerts that they had attended, but this lacked any construction of an original music artist, and this needed to be reflected in the assessment, therefore use of this type of footage should be avoided.

There continues to be a number of candidates who submit montage type music videos made up with what appears to be random footage with a lack of clear star persona and performance footage incorporated. This should be reflected in the assessment of the work as it is not conventional and does not meet the requirements of the brief. The hip-hop genre proved challenging in terms of lip-syncing, consideration should be taken to ensure effective lip-syncing can take place or the assessment may be impacted in column 2 of the assessment grid. There were also instances this year of a song by a male singer being used but the visuals are of a female music artist and vice versa, leading to inconsistencies which would need to be reflected in the assessment in column 2. Care should be taken when candidates are choosing the song to ensure it meets the requirements of the brief and they can successfully create a music video for that particular song.

There were a small number of candidates completed the music website option; there were examples of successful music websites where there was clear star persona of the artist constructed. Audio-visual elements included interviews with the singer or performance footage of the artist/ band at a concert or in a studio, both of which were highly appropriate to the brief. Similarly to the music video option, there were some submissions which failed to construct a representation of a music artist/band which often led to assessment in column 3 of the assessment grid to be generous.

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Summary of key points:

- Centres should access exemplar work on the WJEC Secure site to ascertain the standards for Component 3 before delivering the component and before assessing the work. Internal moderation of marks is recommended to ensure assessment is robust before inputting candidate marks.

- The coversheet must be completed fully and accurately by learners and assessors using the exemplar on the EDUQAS website as a guide. The coversheet should be used as a 'working document' which is started at the beginning of the Component 3 process and completed throughout the NEA process, signing off each section and dating as the NEA is completed.

- All candidates must complete independent research of the chosen form before starting planning and production of the media products. This will ensure a foundation of knowledge that can support the construction of the final production and candidates will have a secure knowledge and understanding of the conventions of the form and the genre that has been chosen. Once the research is completed, this needs to be checked and signed off on the coversheet by both the candidate and the teacher and acts as a milestone within the production.

- All candidates must complete independent planning of their production. This needs to be checked and signed off on the coversheet by both the candidate and the teacher and acts as a milestone within the production to ensure the plans are suitable and meet the requirements of the brief.

- Candidates must adhere to the requirements of the chosen brief in all aspects. These requirements should be used as a checklist to guide candidates during the production process. Where elements of the brief are missing or not incorporated in a conventional manner, this must be reflected in the assessment of the work according to column 2 in the assessment grid. Candidates must also ensure they don't alter the target audience that is specified in the set briefs.

- The Notes for Guidance must be used to ensure that interpretation of the briefs is accurate. Teachers should use the existing media products mentioned in the Notes for Guidance as a basis for the research and planning tasks and to ensure candidates are researching existing productions similar to what they will be producing.

- Original images are essential for all the briefs and candidates must include several images of people within their productions. Productions with no clear models/characters will struggle to reach the higher bands for column 3 of the assessment grid. Candidates should be encouraged to take a wide variety of shots in different locations with different models/costumes to help successfully construct representations and communicate meanings.

- The use of non-original material is not permitted and if any candidate does use non-original material, then it must be declared on the coversheet to avoid any malpractice.

- Use of AI is strictly prohibited, please refer to the guidance regarding AI can be found on the website under the Non-Exam Assessment section.

- Centres should utilise the new Amplified Mark Scheme to further secure the requirements for each band when assessing the NEA.

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- Where possible, teachers delivering this component should attend CPD events either online or in-person to gain a deeper understanding of how the NEA is assessed.

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Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.
Tel: 029 2240 4308
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Qualification webpage: https://www.eduqas.co.uk/ed/qualifications/media-studies-gcse

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